

SQUADRON AIR DRILL: The Spitfires of No. 601 (County of London) and No. 604 (County of Middlesex) Squadrons, R.Aux.A.F. passing over Gatwick in "Flights line astern."

# Ambitious Air Pageant

## Great Variety and Excellent Timing of Events

**N**OT since the days of the Hendon R.A.F. displays has the public been treated to a flying spectacle of such scope and variety as that staged by the *Daily Express* at Gatwick last week-end. Unseasonable weather—dull, cold and with cloud ceiling little more than 1,500ft—failed to discourage either the performers or some sixty to seventy thousand people who travelled to Gatwick for the occasion.

For those fortunate enough to see many of the important flying meetings each year, in particular the S.B.A.C. Display, there were several new items on the long programme to add novelty, while the great diversity of events catered for every individual taste. Praise is due in particular to the pilots from each of the three Services for their really immaculate exhibitions, and to the organizers for a well arranged and expertly timed programme. Although each event was worthy of separate description, space permits little more than a mention of outstanding turns.

To open the main afternoon flying programme (during the morning spectators had seen A.A. gun drill, a W.R.A.F. Band, police dogs and light aircraft demonstrations by Duck, Proctor V, Fairey Junior, etc.) perfect formations of six Meteor 4s and six Vampires flew past, and these were followed by representative civil airliners: a B.E.A. Viking, K.L.M. DC-6; B.S.A.A. Tudor IV; Air France Languedoc; Skyways York; B.O.A.C. Solent; Olley Air Service Dove.

Event 4 was grimly impressive. Lincolns are not intended to fly in formation, but never have six of these speedy "heavies" (in two close vics) swept over with a more purposeful appearance.

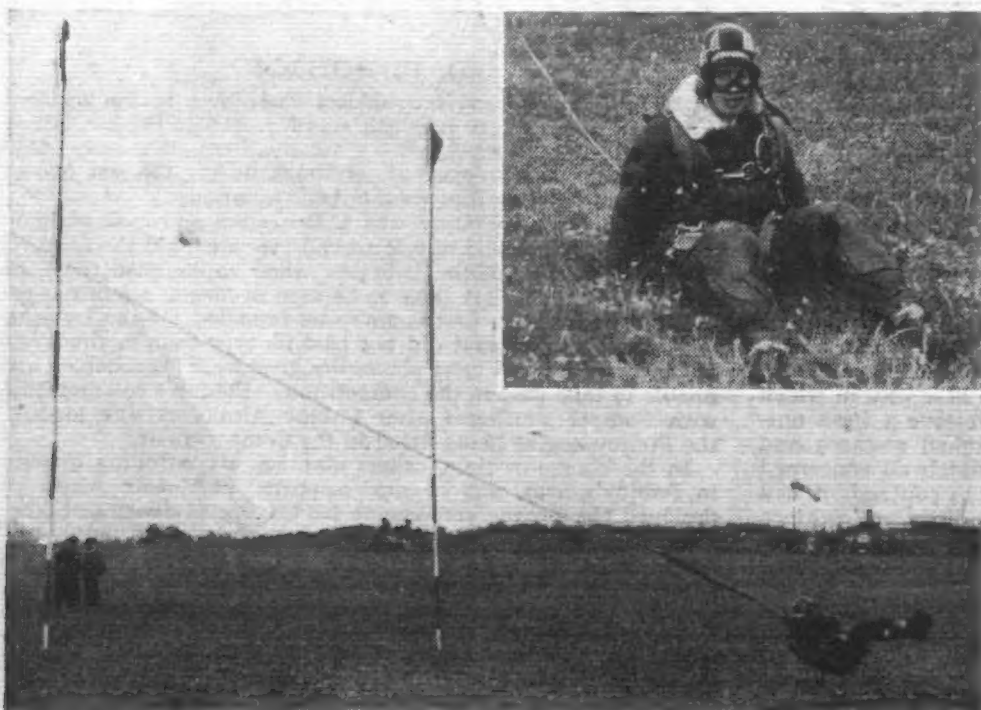
Four Vampires were the first of the fighters after the fly-past to demonstrate the very high standard of formation flying now achieved in the Services. Their aerobatics were unfortunately hindered by the low cloud. Later in the afternoon three Meteors also added another magnificent high-speed formation event, while a fourth, flown by F/L Chambers, indulged in impressive individual aerobatics at very low level.

S/L Wootton, Capt. Tucker and F/L Windle are noted for the formation rolls, and it was a great disappointment not to see an example from the Horsham St. Faith trio on this occasion.

Everyone was glad to see Spitfires represented, and no fewer than twelve Mk. 16s, in the hands of expert Auxiliary pilots, went through squadron drill, including in their repertoire not only an arrowhead formation but a new arrow with "feathered" tail composed of a final vic.

C.F.S. lived up to their traditional high reputation with a skilful instructor-and-pupil act in two Tigers, which many people voted the most entertaining show of the day.

Whirling-wing types were well represented, and a Hoverfly 2, Westland Sikorsky S.51 and Irvin Bell were each put through their omnidirectional paces. The S.51 flew off in the direction of Fleet



WAIT FOR IT: Two photographs showing Michael Cain waiting to perform and performing his towline pick-up stunt.

"Flight" photographs.